South Mountain Corridor Study
Citizens Advisory Team
Meeting Summary

Date: June 26, 2008
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: South Mountain Community College

SMCAT Members Attending:
Camilo Acosta, Arlington HOA
Laurel Arndt, Ahwatukee Village Planning Committee
Sandy Bahr, Sierra Club
Chad Blostone, The Foothills HOA
Al Brown, Arizona Public Health Association
John Cochran, Calabrea HOA
Derrick Denis, Foothills Reserve HOA
Peggy Eastburn, Estrella Village Planning Committee
Michael Goodman, Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council
Wes Lines, Laveen Village Planning Committee
Cathy Lopez, Foothills Reserve HOA
Linda Lujan, South Mountain/Laveen Chamber of Commerce
Laura Rivers, Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce
John Rodriguez, Lakewood HOA
Jack Sellers, East Valley Partnership
Timmothy Stone, Bougainvillea HOA
Terry Tatterfield, Kyrene Elementary School District
Woody Thomas, Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce
Carnell Thurman, City of Avondale

SMCAT Members Absent:
Gila River Indian Community–District 4
Tamala Daniels, South Mountain Village Planning Committee
Clayton Danzeisen, Maricopa County Farm Bureau
Diane Krecker, Mountain Park Ranch HOA
Dave Olney, Valley Forward
Nathaniel Percharo, Pecos Road/I-10 Landowners Association
Laurie Prendergast, Laveen Citizens for Responsible Development
Dave Williams, Arizona Trucking Association

Staff and Consultants

Michael Bruder, ADOT
Fred Garcia, ADOT
Mark Hollowell, ADOT
Larry Langer, ADOT
Jim Lemon, ADOT
Velvet Mathew, ADOT
Barney Remington, ADOT
Floyd Roehrich, ADOT
Timothy Tait, ADOT
Bill Vachon, FHWA
Arianna Valle, FHWA
Michael Book, HDR
Amy Edwards, HDR
Janet Gonzalez, HDR
Pat Higgins, HDR
Heather Honsberger, HDR
Ben Spargo, HDR
Jack Allen, Jacobs NCI
Fred Erickson, KCA
Tom Keller, KCA
Dean Howard, PDG
Andy Jacobs, PDG

Citizens:

Al Brown
Chester Erwin
James Garnand
Jim Jochim
Linda Jochim
Steve Johnson
Tim Lank
Doug Murphy
Robbie Sherwood
Woody Thomas
Michael Walsh
Irene Wesley
Daniel Wishnatsky

Meeting Agenda	Speaker
Welcome and introductions	Tom Keller, KCA
SMCAT role and responsibilities	Tom Keller, KCA
Upcoming SMCAT meeting topics	Tom Keller, KCA
Team member questions and comments	All
Environmental justice	Pat Higgins, HDR
Social conditions	Mark Hollowell, ADOT Pat Higgins, HDR
Noise	Fred Garcia, ADOT
Visitor comment session	Public Tom Keller, KCA

Meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

Tom Keller: Good evening everyone. Can we begin?

No response

Tom Keller: Welcome to the June 26 meeting of the South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team meeting. Sitting at the table are the SMCAT members. The members of the public are sitting in the chairs in the back at the room. The representatives from ADOT and the study team are seated along the wall.

We officially have a quorum tonight. There are a few people who are here on behalf of several of the SMCAT members, who could not be in attendance tonight. First, we have Linda Lujan sitting in for Lisa Bray with the South Mountain/Laveen Chamber of Commerce. Next, we have John Cochran here for Brian Smith with Calabrea HOA. Finally, we have Laura Rivers attending in place of Carola Tamarkin with Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce. We appreciate your attendance.

Janet Gonzalez and Andy Jacobs are manning the sign-in table. They have blue question/comment cards, which the public can use to submit their inquiries. Feel free to take some of these cards and write your questions and comments on them. At the end of the meeting tonight, the public will be given the opportunity to either read their question or submit and I will read it. If you have multiple questions, please write one per blue card.

It is important to note that the SMCAT is a voluntary advisory team, not a decision-making body, and it will not be responsible for decisions made by the State of Arizona or the Federal Highway Administration. The SMCAT meets regularly to review project

status and provide input on issues that are relevant to the project–the single purpose of the SMCAT is to provide a build or no-build recommendation for the proposed freeway. As we go through this process, each of these meetings will have predetermined topics where the appropriate experts will be available.

SMCAT members are expected to treat each other with mutual courtesy, respect and dignity. It is important that individual SMCAT members abide by accepted standards of behavior. Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and will be grounds for exclusion from further participation in these meetings.

As you know, we have changed the format of the SMCAT meetings. We have agreed that there will be an unlimited amount of time for the SMCAT members to ask questions. Because of this, there is the possibility that we may not get to all the scheduled topics on the agenda. This new format went fairly well in the last meeting so I anticipate that it will go equally well at this meeting.

Here is tonight's agenda. You have copies in front of you. There was a last minute change. Because of the schedules of the experts associated with each of these topics, the order of topics tonight will be noise, followed by environmental justice and social conditions. Does anyone have any issues with this?

No response

Tom Keller: Do any of the SMCAT members have questions about any of the information that you have seen recently in the media or with any of the information that has been sent to you?

No response

Tom Keller: Okay, let's move on. The study team has session feedback forms that will be distributed at the break to the SMCAT members. Please make sure you fill out the form on both sides. At the end of the meeting, please see that these sheets are returned to one of the study team members.

Fred Erickson: Tonight, Andy Jacobs will be taking a few pictures. These pictures will be published in study newsletters or on the ADOT Web site.

Tom Keller: At this point I would like to introduce Ben Spargo. Is everybody ready?

No response

Ben Spargo: I want everyone to note the overall SMCAT meeting schedule. We have juggled a few of the topics because of the availability of the presenters. The revised schedule is on slide number 9. In August, the SMCAT should be prepared to have the initial discussions concerning membership and ground rules for the air quality panel. In

October, we will readdress the air quality panel discussion and finalize the information. The revised schedule will be updated on the study Web site. When comparing the revised schedule with the previous one, it is only the order of topics that has changed. As we get further along in the schedule, the remaining meeting topics (that do not have assigned dates) have not changed.

Tonight's topics for discussion are: noise, environmental justice and social conditions. These are the various federal, state and local agencies that the study team has worked with on these issues.

With that, I am going to turn the presentation over to Fred Garcia with ADOT's Environmental Planning Group, who will be discussing the noise impacts for the corridor.

Fred Garcia: I am Fred Garcia. I am here to give you some basic information about noise and information on how noise relates to the proposed South Mountain Freeway.

First, I would like to present a few basic ideas so when we go over the slides they will make better sense to you. The current noise regulations have been in place since the 1970s.

There have been several studies that show that the average person becomes bothered when noise levels approach 67 decibels. Noise is perceived differently by everyone in any typical crowd. When talking about noise we are talking about averages. We record these noise samples with noise meters.

Noise affects people much differently from one person to the next. A young person getting ready for school may have music playing loudly as he or she prepares to go to school. Another person in the same home may hear this music and be annoyed and ask him or her to turn the volume down. Noise is subjective.

The federal government designated their noise level standard being 67 decibels. This level of noise can be experienced when two people stand outside at a distance of three feet. Typically at this distance, these people would be able to hear each other quite easily while using a normal tone of voice. Once a person has to raise their voice in order to be heard by this other person, the sound level has reached at least 67 decibels.

The first slide runs through some of the common definitions related to noise. A decibel is a logarithmic unit indicating the amount of sound energy. The approximate threshold of hearing is 0 decibels, while the approximate threshold of pain to the human ear is 140 decibels. A receiver site is a location at which noise levels are modeled and analyzed. Receiver sites of interest are usually residences, schools, parks or other noise-sensitive land uses. There are other types of locations that fit this category, but there are too many to list on this slide. A monitor site is a location at which noise levels are measured. In some cases, a monitor site is also used as a receiver site. We monitor at locations where there is going to be significant human activity. We concentrate on that area that will be

used for significant lengths of time. The noise readings are taken near the proposed freeway right-of-way.

Noise is defined as unwanted or excessive sound that can come from many sources. There are certain things that you cannot eliminate, such as noise from an airplane or train. If you live near a major roadway then you are going to hear it. This is especially true if large trucks and motorcycles are using the roadway.

Traffic noise is caused by the vehicle's engine, air flow from a fast-moving vehicle, and the sound created from the interaction between the vehicle's tires and the roadway pavement. This interaction creates the constant hum, which is what we try to mitigate.

The average person can hear a difference in three decibels of sound. When we mitigate, we try to lessen the noise levels by five decibels or greater. This is not a wise investment for ADOT if the mitigation will create less than this difference.

So why do we study noise? The construction and operation of this proposed freeway would introduce a major noise source into an area where such noise may not have existed in the past. As we all know, the area is growing. People who have been living in the suburbs get used to the noise levels that have surrounded them. As the land develops around them and more sounds are introduced, these residents tend to be more disturbed by the extra noise. For those people who have been living in the inner city where there are higher levels of noise, the residents tend to be used to higher noise levels and don't seem as affected by traffic noise. I have investigated noise issues in cases where homeowner's residences were relatively equidistant from Interstate 17. One owner was going to sell their home because they couldn't stand the traffic noise. The other homeowner had no problem with the traffic noise. It is a different perception, which sometimes can be an emotional issue.

We used a traffic noise model to evaluate the noise levels using the information that was gathered at the noise receivers and monitors in the Study Area. There are various elements that may affect the noise levels in a particular area. For example, if there is a body of water nearby, this can affect noise levels.

When we talk about noise mitigation, there are some locations where it is just not feasible to build noise walls. The costs in some of these locations are just too high and if it is not feasible, sometimes mitigation in some areas is not justifiable.

ADOT has a pretty good idea about the peak times for freeway noise. However, I like to talk with the residents to find out more about their ideas about the nosiest times on a nearby freeway. I have found that different freeways have different times when they are noisiest. If there is a difficulty in determining the peak noise time of a particular freeway, sometimes 24-hour noise monitoring is performed.

FHWA has a noise abatement criteria list of activity categories from A to E. This establishes a baseline where noise would need to be mitigated for a particular category. In some cases, you may have two schools located near a freeway. Let's say that one school has classrooms closer to the freeway than the other. We would approach noise mitigation for these two schools in different manners. The importance of quiet would be more important to the school with the classrooms located closer to the freeway.

ADOT doesn't mitigate for areas of undeveloped lands for obvious reasons. In some cases there is talk that the land may be developed in the future. ADOT has to know for sure about this development prior to the construction of the freeway. If the freeway is in place when the construction on the development begins than the developer will be responsible for constructing the noise mitigation. If we planned for all the developers after it is well known that there will be a freeway here, we would be in the business of building walls and not freeways. ADOT does not have the money to build sound walls for everyone. We have to cut off at a certain time either to the developer or the local jurisdiction. Having a building permit will establish that we will need to perform certain analysis, but we typically do not go back to add mitigation later since a jurisdiction will sometimes report that a development is planned for a certain location, which ends up not being constructed.

ADOT's threshold for considering noise abatement in residential areas is at a lower noise level, 64 decibels, than the Federal Highway Administration's threshold of 67 decibels. As I said previously, in the 1970s, the federal government mandated that states evaluate their own noise policies, using 67 decibels as the maximum level to where mitigation would need to be performed. Thirty seven states adopted the federal guidance. A handful of states lowered their standard by one decibel; Arizona is the only state that opted to lower the level by three decibels.

If mitigation is warranted in a particular area, ADOT has the following noise abatement goals: In all areas, there should be an effective aesthetic and architectural integration of noise barriers. We work with the cities in order to develop the aesthetics, but if there is something above and beyond the standard selections for designs, the cities must provide some funding. I have received calls from other states that ask about the aesthetic treatments that are used on some of our freeways. When people visit they are impressed with our wall designs. We also work with the public to keep them informed and solicit preferences concerning the noise barriers. ADOT pays careful attention to placement of noise barriers so that emergency vehicle access, security, visibility and drainage issues are addressed. ADOT also pays careful attention regarding noise mitigation so that driver safety, including line-of-sight issues are addressed.

ADOT will not build a noise wall in a community if a wall is not desired. If your community does not wish to have a wall, ADOT needs to get a majority of the people in the community to sign a written agreement that they do not want the proposed wall. If that happens, a wall will not be constructed there.

Heavy construction equipment such as bulldozers, graders, scrapers, dump trucks and cranes, or other activities, such as controlled blasting can generate substantial noise in adjacent areas. Since the equipment is moving from one location to the next, many times what was causing the noise would have moved into the next area within a couple of days. ADOT makes every attempt so that construction noise is minimal in residential areas.

Since the proposed freeway would be constructed in segments, the construction noise could be disruptive to nearby residents during construction of the particular segment and not during the construction process for the entire freeway.

What are the potential impacts after construction? Residents near a freeway may experience noise levels above the threshold. The threshold is 64 decibels–at or above this level, residential areas would be considered affected and would potentially qualify for noise mitigation.

The study team monitored 44 locations along the proposed freeway alignment to determine existing noise levels, which ranged from 44 to 64 decibels. One hundred thirty-nine locations were selected for modeling to determine noise levels after the proposed freeway would be in operation which ranged from 61 to 79 decibels at residential areas near the freeway. ADOT is always taking noise readings. I always get people asking me, why we are conducting so many of these studies. In some cases, they are not separate studies, but just the process of taking noise readings as part of a single study of the area.

This next slide shows a map of the noise receiver and potential barrier locations for the W55 Alternative. These barrier locations are not exact because the traffic noise model is sensitive to elevation. The study team does not have the elevation information at this time. Because of this, the barriers are shown at potential locations and are not exact by any means.

This next slide shows a map of the noise receiver and potential barrier locations for the E1 Alternative.

As I mentioned before, we need the elevation information before we can get more specific about the noise barrier locations. We should have this information when we have the 30 percent design plans, which would identify the horizontal and vertical alignments. It wouldn't be until the 100 percent design plans that we could finalize the noise abatement and give everyone the precise height and length of the noise walls.

If the project were not constructed, noise level impacts would be caused by vehicle traffic along arterial and other surface streets. The No-Action Alternative would result in lower noise levels at the 139 receiver locations than would the Action Alternative, but would cause increased noise levels at other locations, such as along arterial streets.

How can construction-related impacts be reduced or eliminated? Where feasible, ADOT would construct noise barriers first to limit construction noise. ADOT would also ensure

all exhaust systems on equipment would be in good working order and that construction equipment would meet new product emission standards. Stationary noise-generating equipment would be located as far away from residential areas as possible. ADOT would also notify the public of scheduled construction activities so that there would be no surprises.

The quiet pavement project program is a pilot study conducted on the Maricopa County Regional Freeway System to evaluate the effectiveness of pavement types, texturing and specifically overlaying freeways with rubberized asphalt as a possible noise mitigation strategy. In April 2003, ADOT and the Federal Highway Administration launched a study that allowed the use of federal money to test the use of a rubberized pavement overlay in regards to noise mitigation. The program is still continuing, with good results–some areas have had a noise reduction of four to five decibels.

Are there any questions?

Tom Keller: Please limit your questions so that you only ask one question until after other SMCAT members have had a chance to ask their questions. After the other members have asked their initial questions then you can ask second and third questions.

SMCAT Member: On slide 64, the text states that predicted noise levels ranged from 61 to 79 decibels at residential areas near the freeway. Where was the location that was reported as being 79 decibels? I would like to have a chance to review this report.

Ben Spargo: The 79 decibels would be the unmitigated decibel level.

SMCAT Member: That seems like a rather high level for mitigation. What location would be used for the mitigation?

Fred Garcia: The mitigation would be done so that a key location in this area would be addressed.

Ben Spargo: This location can be identified for you in the parking lot issues memorandum.

SMCAT Member: When this testing is performed, how far are the noise receivers located from the freeway? Are they 1,000 feet away? Are they a mile away?

Fred Garcia: It depends. In some areas, residences are located relatively close to the proposed freeway alignment. In these cases, the noise receivers would be located rather close to the proposed freeway alignment.

SMCAT Member: The map on slide 66 shows several portions of the proposed freeway that would not have noise walls. It seems that essentially there is a hole in the mitigation where ADOT does not intend on doing anything.

Fred Garcia: In determining the potential noise wall locations, many factors come into play.

Ben Spargo: In some of these cases, the areas that do not have potential noise wall locations are adjacent to current undeveloped state land. Whether the study team would mitigate these areas would depend on when the developers would have the parcels platted. If the homes are platted after the construction of the potential freeway, then the mitigation would be addressed by the developer.

SMCAT Member: So even though it is pretty much certain that this land will be developed, the developer will need to pick up the price of this mitigation?

Fred Garcia: Unless the developer has a building permit in hand prior to construction of this potential freeway, ADOT would not be providing the mitigation.

SMCAT Member: It doesn't seem right that beneficiaries of the state land trust would need to pay for this.

SMCAT Member: Fred, were you involved with the Draft Environmental Impact Statement?

Fred Garcia: Yes.

SMCAT Member: I am trying to get grasp of the noise wall issue for this study. Would the height of these walls be 20 feet?

Fred Garcia: It could be 20 feet in some locations.

SMCAT Member: So you are saying that Pecos Road could have a 20-foot wall running alongside this potential freeway?

Fred Garcia: In some locations, the wall could be 20-feet tall. The study team won't know the height of the wall until we have more definitive controls. I wouldn't be able to address specifics to the wall height until I am able to see the 30 percent design plans.

SMCAT Member: It seems that you are able to get information from the traffic noise model. That should have given you a good idea about the potential wall height in this area.

Fred Garcia: The conditions between the noise source and the receivers are going to vary on many factors, such as the elevation of the noise receivers. Because of this, there is no way that we can give you these answers right now.

SMCAT Member: Haven't you told us that you know how many cars will be using this potential freeway?

Fred Garcia: That information came from the Maricopa Association of Governments.

SMCAT Member: I have a question about how the No Action Alternative would cause increased noise levels at other locations. This doesn't make sense to me. How can not building this freeway create higher noise level situations?

Ben Spargo: In general what we are saying is that within the Study Area when comparing noise levels, the W55 Alternative noise levels approaching the western end were higher because there were more vehicles on the arterial streets creating elevated noise levels.

SMCAT Member: I think it is weird to present this as though the No Action Alternative is the direct cause of that situation.

Ben Spargo: That situation is an impact of the No Action Alternative.

SMCAT Member: It is the population growth that would be causing the increase in traffic on the arterial streets, which in turn, would cause the increase in noise levels.

SMCAT Member: It sounds as though you have a model that you are using to input the information received at the 139 locations, which is being used to predict noise for the proposed freeway after it would be in operation.

Fred Garcia: There is a template that has been put in place. The information we have is really rough at this point. It will be modified as the design elements become more available when we will come back and make adjustments.

SMCAT Member: I know you are very hesitant to say a particular height for the proposed noise walls, but wouldn't the modeling from this base template give you some idea of how high the walls would be?

Fred Garcia: It doesn't give us the information for the height of the proposed walls. The traffic noise model only identified the Study Area locations that exceed our noise standard criteria. The design planning information will identify the horizontal and vertical controls. This information is required before we can make these estimations.

SMCAT Member: I can understand your inability to know what the design looks like, but don't know why you can't estimate the wall heights.

SMCAT Member: On slides 65 and 66, what do the red and yellow dots signify?

Fred Garcia: They represent the noise receiver and monitoring locations in the Study Area.

SMCAT Member: It looks like there is a vast area in the Phoenix/South Mountain Preserve where there were no noise receivers and monitors. Why was this area not studied?

Fred Garcia: It was determined that the noise in these areas would not affect any businesses or residences.

SMCAT Member: So do I understand you correctly? Are you saying that the Phoenix/South Mountain Preserve isn't considered significant for noise testing because there is no human impact in this area?

Fred Garcia: We have to look at the reasonability and feasibility of what needs to be done. We have a limited time and quantity of money at this part of the process. I am not saying that we will ignore these areas, but more effort can be done when the 30 percent design plans are available.

SMCAT Member: There are some facilities, such as a high school and medical offices that are rather close to the proposed freeway alignment. Shouldn't the noise monitoring have been done closer to the alignment?

Fred Garcia: We will not get an accurate noise reading if we locate the receivers right up close to the proposed freeway. There are factors that have to also be taken into account, such as the elevations of residences or businesses.

SMCAT Member: On slide 66, there is a noise monitor designated as M13. Why is there a gap in the proposed noise barrier between M13 and noise receiver R34?

Fred Garcia: That gap indicates that a noise barrier may not be needed at that location. If there is a small gap between two noise barriers, which doesn't look right, ADOT most likely would fill in the wall for aesthetic purposes.

Ben Spargo: At that location, 51st Avenue generally runs north and south. I believe that this area is mostly agricultural with the exception of the Dusty Lane community. The break in the noise barrier at this location may have something to do with those factors.

SMCAT Member: Yes, that location is private land.

Ben Spargo: Well, some of the land is private.

SMCAT Member: Isn't this the location we have been referencing near 27th Avenue and Pecos Road?

Ben Spargo: Yes. The noise barriers shown here would be near Foothills Reserve from 17th Avenue west to 27th Avenue.

SMCAT Member: What about the large gap in the noise barriers near the South Mountains?

Ben Spargo: Yes, the South Mountains come through there.

SMCAT Member: Can I see slide 65? On the map on the right, noise monitor M17 is located on the east side of the proposed freeway. It looks like you only have a potential noise barrier on the west side of the freeway. Wouldn't sound bounce from this western wall and produce a higher noise level for homes that were on the east side of the freeway?

Fred Garcia: The modeling can give us some of the information associated with how noise would bounce from walls in certain locations. We wouldn't be able to measure the direct affects until we have the 30 percent design plans.

SMCAT Member: If the sound waves are hitting these barriers and bending over the top, does the modeling still support that the mitigated impact zone will be below 64 decibels?

Fred Garcia: We will try to design the walls so that is the case. There are some factors to also take into account, such as temperature inversion that is very difficult to predict.

SMCAT Member: But will this mitigation create a sound level of 64 decibels or less near the residences?

Fred Garcia: Yes. The goal would be 64 decibels or less.

SMCAT Member: I question your response to the question about the sound waves bending over the top of the noise barriers. I believe that anything that intrudes into the Phoenix/South Mountain Preserve from this proposed freeway would need to be mitigated. It is a little irresponsible to leave blank areas along the preserve that would not have the noise mitigation.

SMCAT Member: You stated that the greater the elevation the more difficult it is to mitigate noise from a freeway. If you look along the proposed Ahwatukee stretch, there is a great amount of elevation changes. From your initial testing, do you believe that it is going to be impractical that noise barriers will reduce noise levels to 64 decibels and lower?

Fred Garcia: I would wait until we can run the model with the appropriate elevation information and see what the computer tells us. I would rather not guess.

SMCAT Member: Would noise produced from an aboveground source be more significant than noise from a belowground source?

Fred Garcia: For noise reduction, the ideal situation would be noise produced at ground level. At this level, a significant amount of the noise vibrations are absorbed into the ground.

SMCAT Member: Well, this proposed freeway isn't planned to be at ground level. It has some locations where the freeway would be elevated.

SMCAT Member: Is one of the reasons that other Valley freeways are constructed belowground because this would produce less freeway vehicle noise?

Fred Garcia: That would be a personal opinion. ADOT cannot just design a freeway based on noise. Other things must be considered, such as utilities, and cost.

SMCAT Member: Well, when just considering noise, would an underground profile be a positive benefit?

Fred Garcia: Yes, if money were no object.

SMCAT Member: So are you the expert on this topic?

Fred Garcia: Absolutely not.

SMCAT Member: Why are you here answering these questions when you claim to not be an expert?

Fred Garcia: There are many experts in the world on this subject that have been studying noise longer than me.

SMCAT Member: Earlier tonight, you said that we would hear noise from the proposed freeway from about a mile away. I am not an engineer and as I sit here today and I am noticing the wall of the building outside of the window, which is less than a mile away. Are you saying that if the proposed freeway were constructed at ground level, there would be a 20-foot wall there?

Fred Garcia: There would probably not be a wall there for that distance. Once you are beyond 500 feet from a freeway, the effects of a noise barrier greatly diminish. At a distance of 500 to 600 feet, rubberized asphalt works much better for noise mitigation.

SMCAT Member: That makes a lot of sense. The distance of my community is a shorter distance than the outside wall. I would think that we will hear a great deal of noise from an operational freeway along Pecos Road. So does this mean we would need a 20-foot wall to mitigate the noise?

Fred Garcia: That is a possibility. If the community doesn't want a wall at this location than everyone would have an opportunity to voice their opinion to ADOT to not have a wall constructed there.

SMCAT Member: Can we go to slide 71 on the quiet pavement pilot program? The photo that was used on this slide is in Mesa on the US 60. I notice that a berm is being used here for noise mitigation. Can you define what other potential noise barriers could be used other than a wall?

Fred Garcia: For noise mitigation, either a wall or a berm could be used. In some cases, ADOT has used a combination of a wall and a berm.

SMCAT Member: How does ADOT determine whether to use a natural looking berm rather than a wall?

Fred Garcia: A big factor is the barrier height that is required.

SMCAT Member: This is determined from the noise receivers?

Fred Garcia: Yes. The height would be determined from the noise receiver to the noise source–the required height being relative to the pavement elevation. We would work with the project engineers who would tell us the types of slopes and how much room would be required for the noise mitigation.

SMCAT Member: It sounds like there are a lot of factors involved in this process. Is there any area along the proposed freeway alignment, where a berm or a berm and a wall could be used?

Fred Garcia: It is difficult to say at this point. This would be determined when the amount of excess excavated material would be determined. If there is no excess material, than a noise wall would be used.

SMCAT Member: You mentioned that ADOT will give the community an opportunity to provide input at the noise barrier design. At what point in the process would this occur?

Fred Garcia: Yes, community input would be part of the process. ADOT would conduct meetings during the project design, should a build alternative be selected.

Ben Spargo: Slide number 67 shows the noise analysis process. At each step, there is a public information component. During this process, the location wall height and design would be confirmed. Also, I know someone was asking about the possibility of using berms in this potential project. Using a berm would require much more right-of-way.

SMCAT Member: I am submitting this blue question card with this question to ensure that it is recognized. I think you should be providing us with more background information for all of the topics being presented at these meetings. I would like to see the data relevant to the study team's decisions on all of the issues.

Tom Keller: Thank you everyone for your questions and comments. It is already 7:40 p.m. At this point, we would normally take our break. Is it your pleasure to take a 10-minute break? Would that be okay?

Affirmative response

Break

Tom Keller: Please take your seats so we can begin.

Since we are running behind on time tonight, we may have to push one of the topics to a future meeting.

As a reminder to the public, Janet and Andy have the blue question and comment cards at the back of the room. Time permitting, you will have the opportunity to ask your questions or comments to members of the SMCAT or study team. If we are unable to get to your question, it will be addressed in the parking lot issues memorandum.

We have passed out session feedback forms to all of the SMCAT members. Please make sure that you fill out these sheets and either leave them on the table or hand them in to Janet or Andy before you leave.

One final note, several SMCAT members have referenced the presentation when asking their questions. When doing this, please state the slide number so that your question can be documented accurately.

SMCAT Member: The slides numbers in our packets are different than the ones on the presentation screen.

Ben Spargo: The numbers are different because we moved the noise section to the beginning of the presentation tonight. When referencing the slide numbers, use the ones that are in your packets.

Tom Keller: Are we ready to begin?

Ben Spargo: I would like to introduce a familiar face. Pat Higgins was here a couple months ago presenting the land use topic. He is here tonight to present the subject of environmental justice.

Pat Higgins: Hello. My name is Pat Higgins. Environmental justice involves evaluating how a particular project would affect minorities, the elderly, disabled individuals and female heads of households. The definitions for each of these groups are on the screen, as well as in your packets.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has defined environmental justice as the fair treatment for people of all races, cultures and incomes, regarding the development of environmental laws, regulations and policies. It is based on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin. In 1994, the Presidential Executive Order 12898 on environmental justice was issued, which broadened the scope to include minority populations and low-income populations.

When properly implemented, environmental justice principles improve transportation decision making. This includes making better transportation decisions that meet the needs of all people, designing transportation facilities that fit more harmoniously into communities, providing opportunities for community input in the process and improving accessibility to public meetings, official documents and notices.

Shown here are the four minority groups evaluated: Black, Hispanic, Asian American and American Indian and Alaskan Native.

The Executive Order on environmental justice defines low-income as a person whose household income is at or below the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines. In 1999, a family of four was considered below the poverty level if the household income was $17,029 or less. In 2008, the household income level was $21,200 or less.

The other groups considered in environmental justice include the elderly, disabled and female heads of households. The definitions for each of these groups are on slide number 15.

This chart (slide number 23) shows us several things. On the left is the Title VI or environmental justice population categories. As you look to rows to the right, there are numbers that show the population percentages for each of these categories and how they relate to the different jurisdictions in the Study Area. Most of the numbers are compared to the Maricopa County, which is used as the baseline. The information contained in this chart is based on the 2000 census numbers. When we have the numbers from the next major census in 2010, we will use those numbers.

The following five slides show the distribution of the environmental justice populations and how they relate to the Study Area. For each category, a three color code is used–light blue designates where the specified environmental justice population is below the county average, yellow designates the population being at or slightly above the county average and orange shows a population that has a higher concentration than the county average.

Most of the concentration of minority and low-income populations is located on the western side of the Study Area. The elderly population is relatively low in the Study Area, especially since younger populations tend to be in the Ahwatukee Foothills Village. The disabled population is well below the county average with the exception of the Laveen Village. The female head-of-household population is concentrated in the western portion of the Study Area.

The construction of this proposed freeway could generate short-term impacts, such as noise, vibration, dust and temporary street restrictions and closures. We would try to ensure that the environmental justice populations would be avoided and that there would not be disproportionate impacts to those folks.

If the project were not constructed, urban growth would be projected to continue in the Western Section, causing increased traffic volumes on surface streets. This growth would include the conversion of existing agricultural and undeveloped land to residential, commercial and industrial uses. As the developable land becomes scarce, land values will rise, resulting in higher costs for purchasing and renting homes.

It was determined that the proposed freeway would not cause disproportionately high or adverse effects on any of the environmental justice populations. Therefore, no environmental justice mitigation would be warranted.

Tom Keller: Are there any questions?

SMCAT Member: So it seems that there are some areas where the environmental justice populations are well above the county average that would be located near the proposed freeway alignment.

Pat Higgins: The proposed freeway would not go through these populations, it would bypass them.

Ben Spargo: By looking at the census blocks, we are able to identify the environmental justice populations and avoid those areas.

SMCAT Member: But the people would be breathing in the pollution from the freeway.

Ben Spargo: These populations would be covered by the air quality mitigation.

SMCAT Member: I think that is interesting.

SMCAT Member: By the time we get further along in the process and have the updated census data, could there be changes in the proposed mitigation?

Pat Higgins: There could be some minor alignment changes. There may be very few of these groups represented here tonight. We want to make sure that they are made aware of the project and are treated equally.

Tom Keller: Any additional questions?

No response

Tom Keller: We are in a situation where the time is now 8:10 p.m. Do you think we should we try to get to the next topic? If we do, we may not be able to get to the public questions.

SMCAT Member: Do we have the option to hear the public questions and push the remaining topic to a future meeting?

Tom Keller: Yes, you have that option.

SMCAT Member: I say we move the remaining topic to a future meeting.

Tom Keller: Is there a motion?

SMCAT Member: I make a motion that we move the remaining topic to a future meeting.

Tom Keller: Is there a second?

SMCAT Member: I second the motion.

Tom Keller: All in favor?

Majority of hands were raised

Tom Keller: The motion passes. We will now address the public's questions and comments. The questions can be asked of the SMCAT or the ADOT representatives.

Public Written Question: At the last SMCAT meeting held on May 22, 2008, Bill Ramsay asked this question, "Please confirm what part of the SMCAT meetings becomes public record. Do questions raised by members and the public become part of the Environmental Impacts Statement. Answer from Bill Vachon, "The actual question would not be included in the Draft EIS. However the comment will be documented in the public record." Where can I find the public record that Bill Vachon was referencing?

Bill Vachon: The project record is maintained at either ADOT or the consultant's office.

Public Written Question: How does ADOT specifically plan to prevent CANAMEX truck traffic from using the proposed South Mountain Freeway? In the past, ADOT has used words like *we have passed a declaration that the recommended corridor is Interstate 10 to Interstate 8 to State Route 85 to Interstate 10*. Now with diesel fuel at $5 a gallon and with the average 18-wheeler getting about five miles per gallon, why would any driver take a longer route when the proposed freeway would cut off about 50 miles? Plus it has a lot more amenities, hotels, casinos, etc. than State Route 85. ADOT needs to get some teeth behind their declaration. When will that happen?

Timothy Tait: You are correct. The recommended Phoenix bypass would be Interstate 10 to Interstate 8 to State Route 85 to Interstate 10. There is no statute that enables ADOT or law enforcement to enforce this.

Public Question: Where is this bypass?

Ben Spargo: When driving north from Tucson on Interstate 10, a driver would take Interstate 8 to State Route 85 and back to Interstate 10 in Buckeye.

Public Question: Do you know how many trucks currently utilize that bypass route?

Ben Spargo: No, I would need to do some research to find that answer.

Public Question: I think the public should be provided with that answer. I really doubt it is that many trucks, knowing that this bypass route is not enforced.

Ben Spargo: The Maricopa Association of Governments presented information on current and projected traffic volumes in the Study Area at the December 13 SMCAT meeting. This information is available on the study Web site.

Public Question: Was this information used to determine noise abatement?

Ben Spargo: Yes, traffic volume numbers were used in the traffic noise model.

Public Written Question: Why can't ADOT be honest about the feasibility/reasonability of building the 20-foot-high "Great Wall of Pecos" due to the drainage issues around the South Mountains?

Timothy Tait: I believe that Fred Garcia already answered that question quite well.

Public Question: I don't think he did.

Timothy Tait: Well, Fred can answer the question again.

Fred Garcia: I am not aware of drainage issues in which you are referring. If you want to let me know who you are and where you live, I can give you a range for the height of the noise wall that would be in your area.

Public Question: For a freeway constructed at ground level, there would be less right-of-way required than constructing the freeway belowground. ADOT said that this belowground profile could not be used because it would be too expensive. Instead, it has been decided that the freeway will be constructed at ground level and a 20-foot wall could potentially be located on Pecos Road. Does that bring it together for you Fred?

Ben Spargo: Well even with belowground freeways, noise walls would be required.

Fred Garcia: Yes, that is correct.

Public Question: How come you can't present a range of potential wall heights that we could expect to see along the entire Pecos Road stretch?

Fred Garcia: Had this meeting been a month or so from now, we might have had more information for you.

Ben Spargo: Fred, typically what would be the lowest height considered for a noise wall.

Fred Garcia: Ten to twelve feet is the lowest height and twenty feet would be the maximum.

Ben Spargo: So that would be the potential range of heights that would be in the Pecos Road stretch.

Tom Keller: I wanted to note that Derrick Denis is now seated at the table representing the Foothills Reserve HOA. Cathy Lopez had to leave early.

SMCAT Member: In regards to the proposed noise wall height, Fred mentioned that he may have more information in a month or so. Can we revisit this subject when this additional information is available?

SMCAT Member: I feel a little indignant about this. I asked that question earlier and Fred said that he couldn't provide an answer.

Fred Garcia: More information is being collected at this point, which we will have in a short time.

SMCAT Member: I just think your answers have been a little inconsistent.

Tom Keller: We would appreciate you coming back for a future meeting to discuss this issue.

Public Written Question: With its bloated budget (from $1.1 to $2 billion), isn't the South Mountain Freeway now pork in the upcoming 30-year plan that will be put before voters in the upcoming election?

Timothy Tait: The South Mountain Freeway is identified in ADOT's investment strategy, which involves statewide transportation funding. There is an initiative, which will include the public voting on a one-cent sales tax for transportation funding. This $42 billion plan would include many transportation-related items, such as light rail expansion.

Public Question: When the money for this proposed freeway has doubled in price, it seems that it becomes a poor decision to continue in the process to construct it. By having this one-cent sales tax initiative, everything is all pork. You cannot keep raising the construction cost and throw it into a bigger mix, without expecting the inflated freeway cost to be overlooked. The cost analysis for this freeway is out of control. It is pork for the upcoming election.

Timothy Tait: I am not sure what your question is.

Member of public began talking over Timothy Tait's continued response.

Timothy Tait: It is clear that you don't want to hear my response so I will sit down.

Public Question: What is the official name of the one-cent sales tax initiative?

Timothy Tait: It is the Transportation and Infrastructure Moving Arizona's Economy Act.

Public Question: Has there ever been a situation where ADOT has constructed a freeway that is in close proximity to five schools?

Larry Langer: I know there are at least five schools that are close to the US 60 in Tempe and Mesa.

Floyd Roehrich: On the US 60, some of the schools were already there before the construction, while some were constructed after the freeway was in place. This corridor is much older, but many of the same studies were performed.

Mark Hollowell: I know of four schools that are located near the Loop 101 in Scottsdale.

SMCAT Member: With respect to the freeway being constructed above- or belowground, would a wall height be lower with a belowground profile than a wall height that would be needed for an aboveground profile?

Fred Garcia: Yes, that is safe to assume.

SMCAT Member: I want to know more about when we will be discussing the air quality issue. Since I am responsible for several thousand residents, I want to be prepared to make sure all of their questions are answered.

Ben Spargo: Let me clarify the schedule. In August of 2008, the SMCAT will have a preliminary discussion of the air quality panel. During this discussion, we are going to ask you to think about who you would like to see represented on the air quality panel and what you would like to see for the meeting format. In October of 2008, we will be finalizing the specific for this meeting. The actual air quality meetings will occur just before and after the Draft EIS is released.

SMCAT Member: How many experts will be represented on the air quality panel?

Ben Spargo: That is one of the things that will be discussed in the August SMCAT meeting.

Public Question: I recently took a picture of the noise wall located at Loop 202 and McClintock Drive. The wall seems very tall. It is hard for me to believe it is only 20 feet high.

Fred Garcia: The noise wall may be combined with a retaining wall, which could make the overall wall height taller.

Tom Keller: This concludes the question and answer session. SMCAT members, please remember to complete and return the session feedback forms. Is there a motion to adjourn?

SMCAT Member: I make a motion that we adjourn.

Tom Keller: Is there a second?

SMCAT Member: I second the motion.

Tom Keller: All in favor?

Majority of hands were raised

Tom Keller: The meeting is adjourned.

Meeting ended at 8:31 p.m.

Two blue comment/question cards were submitted after the meeting ended from SMCAT members. The information contained on the cards is as follows:

Please present actual data to the SMCAT–for example the readings at the 139 locations. Telling us the background information is not presenting data, findings or results. Provide those data points for sound monitor and receivers M1-M13 and R1-R35 in the parking lot response for the July meeting.

On slide 64, the range of noise levels was stated as being from 61 to 79 decibels. Where is the 79 decibel location?

Two blue comment/question cards were submitted after the meeting ended from members of the public. The information contained on the cards is as follows:

How much money did ADOT pay the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community for permission to build the Loop 101 on their property? Who was the key force in that decision-making process? Was it ADOT or the Mayor of Scottsdale (Herb Drinkwater)?

Currently the foothills area has six ways to access Pecos Road: 40th, 32nd and 24th streets, Desert Foothills Parkway, and 17th and 27th avenues. The proposed South Mountain Freeway eliminates the 32nd Street access. Based on data from the City of Phoenix, this one mile street carries 8,100 vehicles per day. Now where is that traffic going to go–the side streets like Liberty Lane or on Chandler Boulevard to 24th or 40th streets? Now to put that 8,100 number in perspective based on the MAG computer model, if the South Mountain Freeway is built it will result in a 7 percent reduction on the Broadway Curve. Assuming 200,000 vehicles per day that means a reduction of 14,000 vehicles per day would be removed from this location. The additional overflow into our village streets because of no 32nd Street access is nearly 60 percent of the above number. How is ADOT going to mitigate this local issue or is ADOT going to say that it is a City of Phoenix problem?